

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-25. (cancelled)

26. (currently amended) A mask for the protection against biological agents, comprising:

~~consisting in~~

a cup-shaped chamber defined by a central panel, an upper panel, and a lower panel joined together;

each of the central panel, the upper panel, and the lower panel comprised of a plurality of layers, characterized in that at least one of ~~them~~, having filtering functions, is the layers composed of a cellulose-based substrate supporting a fiber-based matrix structure of borosilicate micro-glass fibers bound together by a vinyl acetate resin, the fiber matrix being supported by a strong, cellulose based, substrate and the structure being treated with and iii) a silicone based coating imparting to impart hydrophobic properties on the structure and the substrate;

a boundary sealing layer located on perimeter edges of the cup-chamber; and

a cylinder-shaped valve located on the outside of the central panel configured to facilitate passage of exhaled air from an interior of the mask to ambient air,

the valve comprising a valve seat secured by a raised valve cover,

the valve cover including apertures,

an upper end of the valve seat including a relief with a concave surface and defining a circumference of the relief,

a continuous, cylindrical cross-sectional shaped, O-ring located along an entirety of the concave surface of circumference of the relief,

a circular valve flap with outside edges located on a upper side of the O-ring,

the valve cover extending over and covering the valve flap, the relief, and the O-ring,

the valve cover further including a flap support pressing down on a center of the valve flap.

27. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim 26, wherein the plurality of layers comprises three layers and the at least one layer is a central layer of the three layer located intermediate i) an outer layer having a covering function and ii) an inner layer having a shape-retaining function. the plurality of layers comprising:

—~~a central layer, having filtering function, composed of the borosilicate micro glass fibers bound together by a vinyl acetate resin, the fiber matrix being supported by a strong, cellulose based, substrate and the structure being treated with a silicone based coating to impart hydrophobic properties,~~
—~~an inner layer having shape retaining function, and~~
—~~an outer layer having covering function~~

28. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim 27, wherein the ~~filter central~~ layer has thickness ranging between 150 and 400 microns and ~~unit area ranging in a amount of~~ between 25 and 65 g/m².

29. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim 27, wherein the inner layer, ~~with the function of retaining shape and providing structure to the mask body as well as providing support for the filtration layer,~~ is made from non-woven fabric ~~obtained by of one of polypropylene fibers and [[or]] polyester fibers.~~

30. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim 27, wherein the inner layer is made from non-woven fabric consisting [[in]] of polypropylene fibers.

31. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim 27, wherein the outer layer, ~~having covering function to protect the~~

~~filtration layer from abrasion~~, is made from non-woven fabric obtained by of polyolefins, polyester or nylon fibers.

32. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim 27, wherein the outer layer is made from meltblown polypropylene fibers.

33-37. (cancelled)

38. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim [[37]] 26, wherein ~~the material of~~ the boundary sealing layer is made from a natural rubber latex resin or a silicone based resin.

39. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim [[37]] 26, wherein the boundary sealing layer is made from natural rubber latex applied in some a 2 mm thickness and in an amount unit area ranging between 200 and 400 g/m².

40. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim 26, further comprising a nose clip located in the upper panel, wherein adjoining a boundary sealing layer, a strip, made from the same material than the boundary sealing layer, is applied in the nose clip area; the strip makes the mask more comfortable to wear and, further on, improves the seal between the mask and the face at the nose portion wherein deformations and plies may normally be present